

# Volente Voice

The Newsletter of the Volente Neighborhood Association

December 2004

## LOOKING AHEAD...2005

It does not seem possible that 2004 is almost over. It has been a busy year for your Volente Neighborhood Association's Board, and it sounds like an even busier year coming up.

We have some exciting projects that we will be working on; such as, a project to benefit a charitable organization, a sign program that will help our Fire/EMS personnel to locate homes, a Lake Travis clean-up session, and a host of others.

Come and join us! The Board meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Fire Hall and all members are welcome to attend. Our meetings start at 7:00 PM and are usually finished no later than 9:00. If you are not a member of the VNA, it is easy to join. Just fill out the membership section of this newsletter, and send it in with \$15.00. Meetings are open to the public; if you would like to be a member of the Board, just let any of the current Board members know.

Your Volente Neighborhood Association would like to wish each and every one of you a happy and healthy New Year.

## VNA MEMBERSHIP

The Volente Neighborhood Association currently has 77 paid members for 2004. If you would like to join or renew your membership for 2005, please complete the membership form (found in this newsletter) and send it along with a check for \$15.00 per voting member to the Volente Neighborhood Association, 15406 FM 2769, Volente TX 78641. Dues received after November 1 are applied to the next year's dues. If you have any questions about membership, please contact Mary Pomplun at 258-9257 or email:

["mailto:mpomp@austin.rr.com"](mailto:mpomp@austin.rr.com). We appreciate your support!

## COYOTES IN VOLENTE

Have you seen any? There has been a lot of news lately on TV and in the paper on the increase of Coyotes in and around the Austin area. Coyotes are predators and can pose a real danger not only to pets, but to small children as well.

On December 4, 2004, the Austin American Statesman featured an informative article on coyotes. Coyotes are wild by nature but they are becoming more brazen.

The article listed the following things you can do to keep coyotes wild:

1. Do not feed coyotes, deer or other wildlife.
2. Eliminate water sources.
3. Position bird feeders so that coyotes can't get to them.
4. Do not discard edible garbage where coyotes can get to it.
5. Secure garbage containers and eliminate garbage odors.
6. Feed pets indoors whenever possible and store pet food inside.
7. Trim and clean, near ground level, any shrubbery that provides cover for coyotes or prey.
8. Don't leave small children unattended outside if coyotes have been frequenting the area.
9. Don't allow pets to run free.
10. If you start seeing coyotes around your home or property, chase them away by shouting, making loud noises or throwing rocks.
11. If you see a coyote, call 311 so authorities can keep track of reports!

## NEW HOUSE SIGNS ON THE WAY!

In an emergency, every second counts. Yet, fire, medical and law enforcement responders often find it difficult to find a particular house in an emergency, especially at night. A conservative estimate is at least 60% of homes in Volente are not adequately addressed, or not addressed at all. Our winding roads, secluded homes, grouped mailboxes, etc., can make it very difficult for our emergency personnel to find our residents without unnecessary and dangerous delays.

The VNA is joining the VVFD Auxiliary, the ESD 14, and other groups in supporting a new program to provide uniform address signage for Volente residents. This program will kick off in January 2005 and will install free reflective address signs within the VVFD response area. (Check out the new address sign installed in the front of the Fire Hall) These metal address signs are made of high-quality reflective material, are easy to read, day or night, and will last for many years without fading. Volunteer "street coordinators" will communicate with residents and turn in the orders for signs for that street. When the signs are received from the manufacturer, they will be

Pay your 2005 VNA dues now! Help cover the cost of newsletter production and postage.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ 2005 Dues Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (\$15/yr)

Issues/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$15 per voting member for annual family membership. Make checks payable to VNA or Volente Neighborhood Association.

**Make sure we have your e-mail address so we can notify you of meetings and other happenings**

installed by other volunteers.

If you can serve as a street coordinator or sign installer for your area, or you would like more information, see "<http://www.volente.org/signs.html>", or call Lonnie Moore at 258-0892. We hope you will join VNA in supporting this important program.

## LOOKING BACK THROUGH HISTORY VOLENTE - THE BEGINNINGS

By Myrna Joy Haynie

In the late 1850's Thomas Anderson, "Squire Anderson" as he came to be known, arrived near the headwaters of Cypress Creek by ox drawn wagon with his wife, Lucy, and their children, Abe, Ed, Julia, and Marian. They came from Pennsylvania by way of Warren County, Virginia. He built his "Kingdom in the Hills" on a knoll near these headwaters just 18 miles northwest of Austin.

Surrounded by a rock fence, this early Texas colonial mansion had a basement, a ten foot central hall with rooms on each side, two fireplaces, three bedrooms and a wide veranda extending across the front. There was a large barn with connecting lots for his horses, cows, and pigs, a well planned chicken house, a smoke house, a spring house where he kept milk and butter, an ash hopper, and in the yard adjoining his house, a huge table for dressing meats. The Squire's irrigation system revealed his inventive genius. A large paddle wheel located 300 hundred yards upstream from the mill forced water up to a concrete tank behind the house; from there water flowed by gravity to the house and garden. An 18" wide cypress board placed at the south end of the water hole conducted the water through a flume at a 45-degree angle across the creek through his 500 yard long irrigation ditch. Through this ditch he could open up gaps at will, causing the water to flow by gravity back towards the creek. There were 18 acres of irrigated land filled with beans, cabbage, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, bell peppers, eggplant, and cucumbers. There were two beautiful peach orchards, an apple orchard, and grape arbors covered the side of the hill. In his spare time, on several flat patches he raised hay, corn, and other food crops. Early in the 1860's, Squire Anderson, Ed and Abe built the Old Mill, primarily for grinding corn. Every part of the undershot wheel was hand tooled with an adze then carefully and painstakingly assembled with wooden pegs. The wheel was fashioned with boxes and turned by a waterfall. The joists and rafters were all hand tooled from cedar logs, some as large as 8' in diameter. The ½" shingles were hand rived from cypress logs. Later a flume was added to increase the momentum. This gave the wheel over and under shot power. Since the miller could only grind forty bushels of corn a day, the farmers, arriving from miles around in community wagon trains, would camp out for days waiting their turn, sharing news and helping each other with their problems. From thence the good supporting community spirit of Volente was born.

Before the Civil War, Squire Anderson grew cotton and

sold it to Mexico. After the War began, the overland trip became too dangerous due to the northern blockades. A passionate supporter of the Confederacy, Anderson in 1863 with the help of his two friends, Nick Hays (brother of the famous Texas Ranger, Captain Jack Hays) and Ephriam Toungate converted the gristmill to a gunpowder mill. The nitrogen needed for making gunpowder was found in abundance in the bat-infested caves along Cypress Creek and the Colorado River. The bat guano was placed in vats along with layers of ashes and broom weed. Water was added to the top, filtered down through the vats, piped off the bottom, and heated until it crystallized. The resultant saltpeter was ground, then mixed with sulfur and charcoal to produce gunpowder for the Confederate Army. So important was this mill to the Confederacy, that the Texas State Military Board controlled its operations during the War. Now, there is that story, or legend, about three Yankee spies sent to sabotage the Mill. They were ambushed and executed. Though their bodies were never found, their wailing voices can still be heard on a still dark night, just before you approach the bridge.

Or, is that the cry of the whippoorwill echoing through the hills?

The fall of the Confederacy brought still another change to the Anderson Mill. Ever the man of vision and new beginnings, in 1870 Squire Anderson converted the gunpowder mill to a cotton gin, the first in Travis County. Six years later he became the first postmaster of the first post office of "Anderson Mill." He lived long enough to see his water wheel gristmill, cotton gin, and gunpowder factory, replaced by the new gasoline powered mills. Squire Anderson died on July 23, 1894. The equipment was sold and the structure deserted. Deserted that is, except for its memories of hard work, laughter, caring and sharing.

A granite historical marker was placed on Volente Road overlooking the mill site in 1936. In 1941, Squire Anderson's Kingdom in the Hills was destroyed by that which had made it great and given it power. Water! Water from Lake Travis. What the Union soldiers failed to do, Lake Travis accomplished. Temporarily, that is. By 1964, the Anderson Mill Garden Club had raised enough money to reconstruct the mill on a hill above the former location site. Thanks to their tireless efforts, this little part of Texas history will be kept alive for generations to come. And thus, I express my gratitude for their collection of histories from which I obtained most of the information for this article.

***Our sincere thanks to Joy for another very informative and interesting article about some of the Volente history not to be forgotten!***

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